

# CDF NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



**CONTACT :** Karen Terrill  
Information Officer  
(916) 653-5123

**RELEASE**  
**DATE:** April 5, 2001



## **BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION DECLARES ZONE OF INFESTATION FOR SUDDEN OAK DEATH**

### **SEVEN COASTAL COUNTIES INCLUDED**

**Sacramento** – Earlier this week, in response to growing concerns about the emerging problem of Sudden Oak Death, the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection authorized the Director of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) to declare a “Zone of Infestation” for the counties of Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Sonoma, which have all become infested by this devastating pathogen. The declaration will allow CDF to use its crews and expend resources to address the problem on state and private lands within the Zone of Infestation.

“The declaration now allows us to help landowners remove trees that pose an increased risk of fire or safety, ” said Andrea E. Tuttle, Director of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. “And, it will help increase public awareness of this growing menace” added Director Tuttle.

“This action by the Board will help the state address the spread of this serious problem,” said Stan Dixon, Acting Chairman of the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. “This is the first formal state action in California to address Sudden Oak Death since the Board and Resources Agency formed the Oak Mortality Taskforce last summer,” added Mr. Dixon.

-More-

Sudden Oak Death is the name given to a complex of biological and environmental factors involved in the death of oak trees. Scientists have discovered a new species of fungus that they now believe is causing this disease which also affects rhododendrons and huckleberry plants.

Symptoms include seeping of dark liquid from the bark followed by a rapid change in the color of the entire crown of the tree from green to brown. Beetles and other fungi often attack before the trees die.

This action was taken with the support of the California Department of Food and Agriculture that is also working on the problem. Implementing regulations are being developed and will likely follow in the weeks ahead at both the state and federal levels to clarify any required actions.

“Great uncertainty continues to cloud this disease. Until we better understand how the disease spreads and how it might be controlled, the emphasis of the state’s program will be focused on increasing public awareness of the voluntary actions that everyone should take to help stop the spread of this infection,” stated CDF Director Tuttle.

Based on the existing science, CDF and the California Oak Mortality Task Force recommend the following actions to avoid spreading the disease from infested counties into uninfected areas:

- Do not collect and transport plant material from black oak, coast live oak, Shreve’s oak, tanoak, California huckleberry and rhododendrons.
- Do not transport soil or firewood.
- Avoid driving or parking vehicles in areas where they may become contaminated with soil or mud.
- Avoid areas of damp soil or mud when hiking, biking, or horseback riding in areas that have the disease.
- Before returning to an area that is free of the disease, do the best you can to remove or wash-off accumulations of soil and mud from shoes, mountain bikes, pet’s feet, vehicles, etc.

More information can be obtained from the California Oak Mortality Task Force web page at [www.suddenoakdeath.org](http://www.suddenoakdeath.org). The Task Force brings together public agencies, non-profit organizations and private interests to address the issue of elevated levels of oak mortality. The Task Force is implementing a comprehensive and unified approach for research, management, education and public policy to combat sudden oak death.